



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jflm



Book review

Older Road Users Myths and Realities, A Guide for Medical and Legal Professionals Morris Odell, editor. Reviewed by Janet Hall

This book is the product of a commissioning exercise by VicRoads, the Victorian statutory authority for transport, “in response to the 2003 Inquiry into Road Safety for Older Road Users by the Victorian Parliamentary Road Safety Committee”, writes the Editor Morris Odell, renowned Forensic Physician and honorary senior lecturer in the Department of Forensic Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne.

Thirteen authors contributed to the exercise; two from Lakehead University Canada, Michel Bedard and Nadia Mullen; five from the Monash University Accident Research Centre, MUARC, Judith Charlton, Peteris Darzins, Sjaanie Koppel, Jim Langford and Joanne Wood; and individually, Mark Cook, Professor of Neuroscience, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne; Olaf Drummer, toxicologist, Head of Scientific Services, Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, Melbourne; Trisha Dunning, Nursing Professor, Deakin University, Victoria; Matthew Naughton, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine Department, Alfred Hospital Melbourne; Carolyn Unsworth, Professor of Occupational Medicine, Latrobe, Melbourne, Jonkoping, Sweden and Boston; and Joanne Wood, Professor of Optometry, Queensland.

As a result, the book is a highly referenced tome, containing approximately 730 references, with which the reader is invited to familiarise themselves, given the disclaimer of liability by the publisher, editors and authors.

The book contains thirteen chapters, which can roughly be divided into 3 parts. Part 1, chapters 1 and 2, defines older drivers, identifies their crash levels and patterns and their risks and responsibilities. It also looks at managing crash risk, and at various approaches to licensing, including conditioned licensing and balancing the safety and mobility aspects of older drivers.

Part 2, chapters 3–8, deal with medical conditions most likely to affect drivers as they get older. These include;

- visual deterioration and eye disease such as cataracts, glaucoma, age related maculopathy, diabetic retinopathy and stroke, etc;
- dementias and cognitive impairment;
- sleep disorders and respiratory problems such as the effects of cigarette smoking, COPD, cough syncope, lung cancer, DVT and PE, asthma, etc;
- various neurological conditions, stroke, Parkinson's Disease, head injury, epilepsy, drugs;

- the use of prescription drugs, benzodiazepines, antidepressants, opiates, anti-diabetic drugs and anti-coagulants etc.
- diabetes and consequences of hypo and hyper glycaemia on driving.

Part 3, chapters 9–13, look at alternatives to driving such as walking and the safety or otherwise of this as an option. Medical assessment is studied in depth with examples of different models, including the Victorian Occupational Therapist's approach. Fatalities are examined from Coroner's files and the association with alcohol, drugs and medical conditions. The final chapter focuses on “end of driving” and the impact this could have on an individual.

Whilst the topic of traffic medicine is not my chosen field of study, I was highly impressed, not only by the detailed content and extensive referencing by all contributors, but also by the format of this book and the ease with which it could be used by an unfamiliar reader. I particularly liked the initial Synopsis, detailing the chapter content as well as the Summary and Conclusions.

I found one or two small errors within the text. Page 66 Fig. 3.5 caption reads, “Schematic representation of the effect of glaucoma on a real-world driving scene”, whilst the pictures are labelled, “View of driving scene without cataracts and with cataracts.” Similarly on page 132, I read, “Elderly drivers may be more prone to problems with sleep disturbance, predisposition to dementia (Jellinger, 2004) and sleep disturbance.” Should this have read epilepsy?

Despite these, this is a potent reservoir of evidenced based material which I'm sure will be highly valued by those working in this field. Of course some authors emphasise the need for more research. This is especially so in the area of visual testing, particularly with Useful Field of Vision, UFOV and contrast and motion sensitivity tests. Equally, whilst the Victorian driving assessment model is said to be “envied internationally”, a call goes out for “larger cohort studies and randomised controlled trials” so that “assessments used and rehabilitation practices employed, are also world class.”

Janet A. Hall
Police Service of Northern Ireland, University of Ulster, UK
E-mail address: janet132@doctors.org.uk

11 March 2010
Available online 2 April 2010